

Field Hearing:
Subcommittee on Healthy Families & Communities
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary & Secondary
Education

“High School/College Dual Enrollment Programs”
Friday September 18, 2009

Opening Statement
Chairman Kildee

I’M PLEASED TO WELCOME MY FELLOW SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS TO MY HOMETOWN. IT IS AN HONOR TO HAVE EACH OF YOU HERE TODAY. I ALSO WANT TO WELCOME THE PUBLIC, AND OUR WITNESSES, TO TODAY’S HEARING ON HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS.

I CANNOT THINK OF A BETTER LOCATION FOR TODAY’S HEARING. JUST LIKE MANY COMMUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE NATION, FLINT, MICHIGAN IS NOT WITHOUT ITS CHALLENGES. IN THE FACE OF RECORD UNEMPLOYMENT AND SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC DOWNTURN, THIS COMMUNITY IS WORKING HARD TO CHANGE ITS FUTURE. A FUTURE, WHICH RESTS IN THE HANDS OF TODAY’S STUDENTS.

EARLIER THIS YEAR, IN HIS ADDRESS TO A JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS, PRESIDENT OBAMA ASKED EVERY AMERICAN TO COMMIT TO AT LEAST ONE YEAR OF COLLEGE AND PLEDGED TO DO MORE TO MAKE COLLEGE ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE FOR ALL AMERICANS.

THIS IS AN IMPORTANT GOAL FOR COMMUNITIES LIKE FLINT, AND ONE WE CAN ACCOMPLISH IF WE INVEST IN INITIATIVES THAT GIVE EVERY AMERICAN THE OPPORTUNITY TO PURSUE HIGHER EDUCATION.

IN MICHIGAN, AND A GROWING NUMBER OF STATES THROUGH THE COUNTRY, DUAL ENROLLMENT AND EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAMS HAVE EMERGED AS ONE PROMISING STRATEGY.

DUAL ENROLLMENT AND EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAMS ENABLE STUDENTS TO EARN HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE CREDIT SIMULTANEOUSLY, FULFILLING THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA WHILE PUTTING THEM ONE STEP CLOSER TO A COLLEGE DEGREE. STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN AN EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAM, FOR EXAMPLE, TYPICALLY GRADUATE WITH BETWEEN 30 AND 60 COLLEGE CREDITS – TUITION FREE. THIS TRANSLATES TO AS MUCH AS 1 – 2 YEARS OF COLLEGE EDUCATION.

WITH NEARLY HALF OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS AND 40 PERCENT OF LATINO STUDENTS ATTENDING HIGH SCHOOLS WHERE THE MAJORITY OF STUDENTS DO NOT GRADUATE, WE MUST CHANGE OUR APPROACH. WE OWE THE SAME COMMITMENT TO OUR LOW-INCOME STUDENTS WHO

ARE FIVE TIMES LESS LIKELY TO EARN A COLLEGE DEGREE THAN OUR MIDDLE-AND UPPER-CLASS STUDENTS, AND GIFTED STUDENTS WHO MAKE UP 20 PERCENT OF HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS. INDEED, A HIGH NUMBER OF GIFTED CHILDREN ARE AT RISK-OF DROPPING OUT BECAUSE THEY LACK THE ACADEMIC CHALLENGE IN THEIR CURRENT PROGRAMS.

DUAL ENROLLMENT AND EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAMS PROVIDE THAT OPPORTUNITY. STUDENTS AT THESE SCHOOLS HAVE SEEN THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IMPROVE, THEIR FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES EXPAND, AND THEIR SUPPORT SYSTEM GROW.

TO BUILD ON THIS SUCCESS, I HAVE INTRODUCED THE FAST TRACK TO COLLEGE ACT WITH MY SENATE COLLEAGUE HERB KOHL. THIS LEGISLATION WOULD INVEST IN THE EXPANSION OF SUCCESSFUL DUAL ENROLLMENT AND EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAMS AND PROVIDE RESOURCES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW PROGRAMS NATIONWIDE. IT IS MY HOPE THAT MORE AT-RISK STUDENTS HAVE THE SAME OPPORTUNITY AS THE STUDENTS AND ALUMNI OF MOTT MIDDLE COLLEGE AND GENESEE EARLY COLLEGE.

TODAY, WE WILL HEAR FROM ONE OF THESE STUDENTS, AS WELL AS ADMINISTRATORS AND PARTNERS IN GENESEE COUNTY'S TWO EARLY COLLEGE PROGRAMS – MOTT MIDDLE COLLEGE AND GENESEE EARLY COLLEGE. I HOPE TODAY'S TESTIMONY PROVIDES OUR COMMITTEE WITH GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF THE POTENTIAL DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS HAVE FOR REFORMING OUR NATION'S HIGH SCHOOLS AND INCREASING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.

I WANT TO THANK ALL OF OUR WITNESSES FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION IN TODAY'S HEARING AND I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR TESTIMONY.